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ABSTRACT

Chapter 9 of a revised volume on school leadership, this chapter focuses on the principal's instructional leadership goals and functions. Leading the instructional program requires both an understanding of educational technique and a personal vision of academic excellence that can be translated into effective classroom strategies. Research shows that principals can have a profound indirect effect on students' learning experiences. This influence is shaped by the community and institutional context and by the principal's management style and personal temperament. Of the many tasks performed by principals, five most clearly influence a school's instructional program: (1) defining the school mission; (2) managing the curriculum and instruction; (3) promoting a positive learning climate; (4) observing and giving feedback to teachers; and (5) assessing the instructional program. Principals' instructional leadership duties should not be overemphasized at the expense of unofficial leadership found in schools. The key to effective instructional leadership may well lie in principals' flexibility in sharing duties and their ingenuity at matching these duties with the appropriate department heads, assistant principals, or teacher committees. Understanding the critical leadership functions is a good first step toward creating an effective learning environment. (MLH)

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Chapter 9

Leading the Instructional Program

James R. Weber

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Chapter 9

Leading the Instructional Program

James R. Weber

Careful observation of leaders usually shows that leaders are savvy performers who know their environments, their goals, and their limits, and who often compromise for the good of the organization. Although charisma is undeniably a part of leadership, it probably assumes the same proportion as Edison's inspiration: the 1 percent that develops after the 99 percent of hard work and careful analysis.

In fact, the most revealing definitions of instructional leadership do not even mention charisma. Instead, they talk about the workmanlike care of administrators, lead teachers, and others who put excellence of the instructional program first in their working (not just their verbal) priorities:

> Instructional leadership is the principal's role in providing direction, resources, and support to teachers and students for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school. (James Keefe and John Jenkins)

> We broadly interpret the concept of instructional leadership to encompass those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning. Generally such actions focus on setting schoolwide goals, defining the purpose of schooling, providing the resources needed for learning to occur, supervising and evaluating teachers, coordinating staff development programs, and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers. (Wynn De Bevoise)

> Instructional leadership is leadership that is directly related to the processes of instruction where teachers, learners, and the curriculum interact . . . . To exert leadership over this process, the principal or other leader must deal with—in the case of teachers—supervision, evaluation, staff development, and inservice training. In governing the content of instruction, that is, the curriculum, the instructional leader will oversee materials selection and exercise choices in scope and sequence, unit construction, and design of activities. (Keith A. Acheson with Stuart C. Smith)

The general goal of instructional leaders, then, is to improve or maintain conditions that encourage student learning. But to do this a principal must balance the needs of a particular school, the needs of the community in

which it is set, and the resources he or she can bring to instructional management.

Although researchers approach the topic of instructional leadership from various perspectives, collectively their findings suggest that it is a dynamic process. Instructional leadership is long-term dedication to instructional excellence, not a one-time resolution to "get more involved in instruction." It includes both instructional and school management issues: evaluation of teachers and students, school climate, curriculum, discipline, material resources for teaching, community support, staffing, decision-making methods at the department and administrative levels, short- and long-term goals for instruction, personal interaction between administrators and teachers, and so forth. As the research suggests, leading the instructional program requires both an understanding of educational technique and a personal vision of academic excellence that can be translated into effective classroom strategies.

Principals perform many tasks. Their days always seem to be on the run: meeting with parents, fielding queries or problems from the central office, dealing with students' discipline troubles, coordinating care of the physical plant, looking into instructional planning, and handling faculty relationships, to mention only a few tasks. A case can be made that any of these activities can have some impact on the instructional program. The majority of this chapter is organized, however, around five central activities that most directly influence a school's instructional program:

- defining the school's mission
- managing curriculum and instruction
- promoting a positive learning climate
- observing and giving feedback to teachers
- assessing the instructional program

Before discussing these tasks, it is important to consider the environment in which these tasks are performed. In the community, the school's organization, and the values held by its staff reside both the problems and the resources with which instructional leaders work.

Then, at the end of the chapter, attention turns to a consideration of whether other individuals, not just the principal, can share the responsibility for instructional leadership.

The Contexts of Instructional Leadership

> The leader's integrity is not idealistic. It rests on a pragmatic knowledge of how things work. —Lao Tzu

To understand how principals can affect the instructional environment

of schools, we must first examine the contexts in which the principal must function. Principals operate in a multilevel world, working with influences both within and outside of the school—with community members and their interests as well as with teachers, students, and other administrators. Personal characteristics and beliefs also affect principals' decision-making processes and their style of instructional leadership.

The Community Context

The impact of the community on the behavior of principals and the nature of their work was so evident, say David Dwyer and other researchers from the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, after closely examining the activities of five successful principals, that they had to modify their model of instructional management. These researchers followed each of the five principals for three workdays each, observing and interviewing them about their intentions and actions. They were primarily interested in how successful principals organize their school's instruction and what roles they play in managing the instructional process. Researchers spent twenty to thirty hours in each school observing classes and talking to students and teachers. Documents pertaining to each school's instructional process were also analyzed. After analyzing the data they gathered, the researchers concluded that the attention of these principals was often devoted to matters external to the school building.

Some of the principals viewed their involvement in community-related tasks in a negative light, as something that reduced the time they could devote to other kinds of tasks. When principals must spend time negotiating with the police, for instance, they have less time to devote to instruction-related activities. On the other hand, principals tap community resources for needed materials or personnel. Community support can be important at school board meetings and in a variety of school-related fundraising activities. Indeed, community support for unorthodox programs or approaches may serve as a buffer between a principal and the central office. The Far West Lab's study mentions one principal who felt a particular responsibility to his low-income community, defining his role as both a community leader and a school leader. Consequently, he took a personal interest in the problems of students and their parents.

A community's influences on the instructional process of the school are reflected in the Far West Lab's study as well. Student turnover, for instance, is affected by the mobility of families in a district, making student placement a continuing concern for some principals. Funding cuts, resulting from decisions beyond district control, produced heightened concerns about bond issues and, thus, about the erosion of public support for instructional programs.

Moreover, the socioeconomic status of the community appears to be related to successful principals' management styles. A study by Phillip Hallinger and Joseph Murphy suggests that successful principals in low-income

communities tend to be strong managers who assume more authority in instructional matters than do their counterparts in higher-income communities. They also tend to be more actively involved in supervising instruction and in trying to improve school climate. They are instrumental, say Hallinger and Murphy, in creating climate. Higher-income communities, on the other hand, tend to give their principals the role of organizational monitor: coordinating the curriculum, evaluating instruction, and checking on student progress.

Similar findings are reported by Shirley Jackson and her colleagues, Richard Andrews and his colleagues, and other researchers who have found that effective low-income urban schools are led by assertive principals with a centralized leadership style. Such principals assume more authority in setting individual teachers' instructional agendas.

The Institutional Context

It is noteworthy that such "external" factors as community socioeconomic status (SES) may influence how a principal tends to manage instruction. However, schools can also be considered as institutional "cultures" with their own particular characters. Like other kinds of institutions—corporations, political parties, and churches, for instance—schools have unique institutional "cultures." But unlike many other institutions, schools do not tend to be hierarchical in structure, with neatly established lines of authority and communication.

Terrence Deal and Lynn Celotti studied principals' influence on classrooms in 103 elementary schools in 34 San Francisco Bay area school districts. They found that, although collateral services such as food services or supplies may be managed in top-down fashion, instruction is not effectively coordinated through formal channels: "For administrators who approach subordinates or superiors assuming that schools operated on a business or industrial logic, one can predict conflict, personal tension or disillusionment, and reduced administrative effectiveness."

Thus, leadership in instruction is not merely a matter of putting a leader's intentions into action. Instructional leaders work within a context in which their workers—that is, teachers—must be trusted as well as trained. Principals must work with the existing resources in a school and improve the quality of instruction through strategies of persuasion and change. When attempting to manage instruction, principals must not disregard the existing norms in their schools. The question for instructional leaders, then, becomes how they can recognize and contribute norms that positively influence instruction.

Steven Bossert and colleagues found that studies have identified at least four characteristics of effective school cultures. These characteristics form a picture that may help to clarify what instructional leaders can hope to accomplish in their pursuit of instructional excellence. Successful schools tend to have

- a school climate conducive to learning—i.e., one that is free from disciplinary problems and vandalism
- a schoolwide emphasis on basic skills instruction
- the expectation among teachers that all students can achieve
- a system of clear instructional objectives for monitoring and assessing students' performances

These characteristics of effective schools appear to be the outgrowth of *school norms*, that is, the expectations collectively held and generally striven after by principals and teachers in these schools. Judith Warren Little has noted that successful schools always have two vital norms that help to shape teachers' interactions with principals and with each other. First, there is a norm of *collegiality*, by which teachers expect to work closely together as colleagues. Second, there is a norm of *continuous improvement*, meaning that teachers often scrutinize and discuss their teaching practices, and that experimentation in teaching strategies is encouraged. These norms testify to the mutual support and professional interactions among the staff in effective schools.

The Management Styles of Instructional Leaders

In addition to the community and institutional influences, a third factor also affects principals' management behaviors—their personal characteristics. Even when differences in community and institutional contexts are taken into account, the management styles of successful principals vary widely. Whereas some principals manage by maintaining existing norms in a school and influence others by suggestions, others exercise control over instructional practices at the classroom level, monitoring and even changing teachers' lesson plans.

Of course, principals' behaviors are not solely controlled by their temperaments; as mentioned above, they are also influenced by the surrounding community and by the school itself. The Far West Lab study suggests that principals' management styles may be less obtrusive in schools with established, veteran faculty, and more interventionist in schools with less experienced or rapidly shifting faculties.

Nevertheless, principals do seem to exercise their authority with distinctly individual styles. Such stylistic preferences also have some influence over the way principals structure their schools and over which behaviors they reward and how they reward them.

It is clear that principals need not be born with charismatic personalities to be effective instructional leaders. Indeed, the conclusion of most recent research is that several different personal styles seem to be effective in providing instructional leadership. Ethnographic studies of principals by Ar-

thur Blumberg and William Greenfield and by Dwyer and others suggest that the personal characteristics of strong instructional leaders are extremely diverse: some are assertive leaders, others are facilitative; some prefer centralized authority over instructional matters, others give teachers instructional autonomy.

Although successful principals possess a wide range of personal characteristics, a few traits seem to be present in most successful instructional leaders. The welfare of the students in their care is probably the single most important concern of successful principals. With their eyes on this ultimate goal—improved student learning—good instructional leaders are able to modify or alter their preferred modes when situations require. Dwyer and his colleagues observed that such situations usually "evolved rapidly in the setting and were based on the principal's perception that a child or children in the school were in physical or emotional jeopardy." Blumberg and Greenfield also point out that many of the effective principals they studied were innovators who retained improving student learning as their goal but continually sought new ways to achieve this goal. Successful principals defined what was possible for them to do only after testing the limits. They avoided prior assumptions about what could and could not be accomplished.

A third quality of successful principals, noted by Dwyer and others, was the predictable routine set down by effective instructional leaders. "With their students and their own overarching goals in mind," these researchers say, "the principals invested their time in the management of the mundane details of their organizations: the physical and emotional elements of the school environment, school-community relations, the teaching staff, schoolwide student achievement, and individual student progress."

One principal, for instance, greeted children as they came to school in the morning. He was a visible presence in the school, who moved through the halls, visited classrooms, talked to teachers and students, and examined students' work. He also expressed interest in students' learning modes—aural, visual, or kinesthetic—urging teachers to adapt lessons to students' preferred modes of learning.

Although these routines involve common acts of the principalship, the researchers stress that the "success of these activities for instructional management hinges . . . on the principal's capacity to connect them to the instructional system." Dwyer terms this routine, pragmatic approach to instructional management a "strategy of incremental action." Routine activities performed by principals can help keep schools moving toward long-term goals such as maintaining norms of student behavior, suggesting changes in teaching, or developing an awareness of the distractions and changes underway in the school. The effects of these routine actions can be substantial if a principal carefully selects the routines he or she performs.

A principal in the Dwyer study succeeded in focusing the energy in her schools on instruction by reducing the number of school rules from twenty to six. Students were able to memorize the rules more easily, allowing dis-

cipline to be simplified. Furthermore, she used the contacts she had with students for disciplinary reasons as opportunities for direct teaching, asking students to bring their homework with them when they met with her. She checked their work and informally tested their understanding of the material.

In general, then, successful principals have a pragmatic understanding of the school environment that assists them in their efforts to improve student performance. Such pragmatism requires influencing the school environment, first through modes of behavior that encourage positive learning outcomes, and second through routine activities that make their work reliable and visible.

The Principal's Influence

With these perspectives, we can answer the question, "How can principals actually have an effect on teacher performance and student learning?" Principals can encourage the adoption of institutional norms that favor collegiality, instructional improvement, and student achievement. They can wield influence in areas that are related either directly or indirectly to instruction. Direct influence can occur in observation and evaluation of teachers, for instance, or in reviewing curriculum. Indirect influence, which can also affect school norms, can occur in setting general instructional goals for the school, garnering community support for instructional programs, organizing and staffing programs, and placing students in appropriate classes.

Given these findings, it is useful to examine more specific strategies that instructional leadership requires, to move from discussing factors that contribute to a principal's general effectiveness to those domains often cited as essential to strong instructional management.

Defining the School's Mission

Because schools are loosely coupled organizations (the workers enjoy relative autonomy in nearly all essential aspects of their work), motivating staff members to work toward common goals can be a major task for an instructional leader. A shared sense of direction already exists in most tightly coupled systems. But in schools, staff members need to be reminded of goals and need a firm but flexible hand on the helm. According to Karl Weick, "The administrator of a loosely coupled system centralizes the system on key values and decentralizes everything else." Reaching a consensus on instructional goals, then, is extremely important.

Common goals are the glue that binds the system together. "Articulating a theme, reminding people of the theme, and helping people to apply the theme to interpret their work," Weick asserts, "all are major tasks of administrators in loosely coupled systems."

The theme a principal may choose to articulate may be a synthesis of

the influences discussed in the previous section—a community's long-term needs; his or her personal vision of what a school can be; and realistic, attainable day-to-day objectives in the classroom. To find the theme, a principal may need to assess the values and strengths inherent in the community, students, and staff.

Addressing Community Expectations

As James Lipham and his colleagues point out, the broad objectives of schools have generally encompassed at least four dimensions: intellectual, social, personal (including aesthetic, ethical, and physical), and vocational. Both those outside of and within a school are likely to agree on the need for schools to address these four dimensions. However, which of these dimensions receives the greatest emphasis may shift from time to time; certainly, at any given time, one community interest group may be more influential than another.

Of course, principals may be hard pressed to distinguish between significant and insignificant changes in community expectations. For instance, although there has been a gradual shift in emphasis from intellectual skills to personal and social skills in school curricula, communities still expect schools to teach students the academic basics. Principals can monitor the community's real needs by being actively involved in community groups, attending professional meetings to compare experiences, or taking courses in the sociology, politics, or history of society's demands on schools.

A principal can identify the community issues affecting instruction more formally by conducting a needs assessment survey, by indepth interviews with community members, or by initiating an ongoing community group. Moreover, Lipham and his colleagues strongly recommend associating issues with particular community figures—noting their roles in the community, their reputations vis-a-vis the schools, or their positions on issues in the past.

A Vision for Success

The community may provide a frame of reference for defining a school's mission, but it is the leaders' visions that guide the day-to-day functioning of schools. In Dwyer and others' study of eight principals, all the successful principals "had a working theory that guided their actions. They all sought to understand how modifications in the structures of their schools influenced youngsters." All the participants in the study thought of themselves as "the pivotal points" around which the disparate pieces of the school turned. Blumberg and Greenfield also found principals' visions to be a leavening agent. They quote some of the principals on what they want their schools to be, noting the diversity in content but the similarity in the strength of their individual visions. The following samples are representative:

> What I don't want it to be is a single-minded approach. I don't want

> it to be an open school or a traditional school, or a school without walls, or a math school or a science school . . . . I want to be able to accommodate the different learning styles of different kids and teachers, the different strengths of different teachers. I think if we have that rare person who is an excellent lecturer, I say let that person lecture, and in fact, encourage that person to lecture . . . capitalize on those strengths.
>
> I figure if the staff gets educated, and gets exposed to new ideas, they'll transmit them to kids . . . and I found it very frustrating in the beginning to realize where they were, because I kept thinking they were here, and I'd get more data and find out they were even further back than that . . . . They're flying by the seat of their pants. They don't know why they're doing it. They're doing the wrong thing up in their own classroom, and I don't think that's okay. I think they need to know why they're doing what they're doing. Maybe they won't change a thing . . . but at least if they know . . . what purpose it has to the total picture, then that's okay.
>
> When I went in there . . . I think the essential thing was to make calm out of chaos . . . . For the most part we were successful in doing that . . . . I don't think I was successful in turning around the education program . . . in terms of scholastic achievement. Each year we took an increasingly larger number of students who were already academically troubled in reading and basic skills . . . and we instituted programs to deal with this clientele but I always felt that we were not getting them to achieve . . . . We had too many kids graduating with "D" averages, just barely minimum, and that was the failure that I saw.

Successful leaders do not stop with envisioning what they want for the schools, though. They also actively work to realize their vision. According to Blumberg and Greenfield, "it was this personal commitment to a particular educational or organizational ideal, and their willingness to articulate and work for what they believed in and felt was vital to the success of the students and teachers in their schools, that distinguish [successful principals] from many of their administrative peers." Indeed, perhaps because they have an overarching vision of what the school could be, these leaders are better able to take the initiative in improving instruction. Because of their educational ideals, for instance, they can emphasize student achievement and teacher performance despite community and institutional pressures to settle for mediocrity or a diffusion of energy. Moreover, acting on their ideals for the school probably prevents them from getting bogged down in administrative trivia. They tend to share the paperwork with other administrative staff, allowing themselves more time to pursue instructional leadership initiatives.

Although visions can provide direction and impetus for instructional leadership, leaders must involve other people in the realization of these visions. The process of staff involvement means communicating goals—perhaps being

willing to revise unrealistic goals but insisting upon approaches consistent with the leader's overarching ideals of schooling.

The setting of overall objectives for schooling, program objectives, course objectives, and unit objectives serves to translate theory about outcomes into reality. In these objectives, the broad goals become visibly related to the students and to classroom activities. An instructional leader, researchers agree, must attend to each of these levels of objectives (from the school as a whole down to each unit), reviewing and monitoring them for consistency and relevance. Careful attention to the program, course, and unit objectives will enable the leader to tranform instruction.

Managing Curriculum and Instruction

The implementation of a school's mission can be seen most clearly in curriculum and instruction. As in defining goals, the major tasks confronting a principal in implementation may actually be recognizing the instructional options available to teachers and then selecting, with teachers, those that best fit the constraints provided by the school environment.

That instructional leaders need to know about instructional methods and trends is fairly obvious. While a perceptive yet untrained observer may be able to discern gaps in a teacher's presentation, leaders need to provide informed advice and communicate priorities for improvement. At the very least, instructional leaders must share with teachers an understanding of instructional goals and a common language for describing and analyzing teaching practices. This sort of knowledge may be acquired most readily when instructional training and study includes both principals and teachers, as Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little attest. Collegiality, which Little defines as "recourse to other's knowledge and experience, and to shared work and discussion," has a profound effect on instructional success.

Essential Knowledge

Of course, a principal's knowledge must be credible to teachers. A list of some of the areas of knowledge needed in instructional leadership, such as the one following, may discourage potential leaders at first. However, as with most lists of skills, a practitioner's working knowledge of these areas may be greater than he or she assumes:

Trends in content fields, such as
- English/Language Arts
- Reading
- Foreign Languages
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical and Health Education
- Social Studies

Trends in Media and Methods, such as those in

- Textbook Selection
- New Technologies
- Teacher-Developed Materials
- Computer Software
- Personalized Education
- Direct Instruction
- Mastery Learning
- Cooperative Small-Group Learnng
- Study Skills

Classroom Supervision Areas, such as

- Teaching Styles
- Class Size
- Grouping Practices
- Use of Time and Space
- Instructional Strategies
- Instructional Media/Materials
- Homework

Considering this list of knowledge and trends, it is doubtful that every principal can master all the information necessary to be a perfect curriculum advisor, as well as perform all the other duties in the principal's job description. Like a good infielder, though, it is not so important for principals to be everywhere or know everything, but to be in the right place at the right time (or to know the "right stuff" to improve a teacher's instruction). So, how much must a principal know about instruction?

There are two basic components to what principals need to know: (1) the general processes common to effective teaching and learning, and (2) the specific needs and interests of their school's instructional staff. Within these two areas, principals can have a pragmatic understanding of curriculum and instruction.

In short, they must be experts on the general principles of effective teaching. At the very least, they must understand basic principles of learning: that examples allow concretion of abstract ideas, that students should grasp one concept before moving on to another, and that group instruction and individual instruction may meet different needs.

Next, most administrators seem to agree that, to be effective instructional leaders, principals should acquire information and advocate skills that are interdisciplinary. Writing and library use, for instance, are cross-disciplinary skills; principals can encourage writing in most of the students' classes or require them to use the library for research projects.

Knowledge and Skills for Effective Supervision

To be an effective supervisor of teachers, an instructional leader must

also be familiar with and sensitive to the teachers he or she supervises. According to Keith Acheson, many would-be instructional leaders often simply see what teachers are doing and then tell them what they ought to do differently. "This simple approach overlooks the reality that only when teachers are able to do what they *intend* can much progress be made toward getting them to do what they *should* be doing." It is critical to make sure that teachers share the same goals as their leaders—to see that they are intending to do what they should be doing. Thus, evaluation and training are inseparable activities.

Acheson maintains that a principal needs to have knowledge and skills in three areas when observing and evaluating teachers: planning with the teacher, observing instruction or gathering data from other sources, and providing feedback. Says Acheson,

> *Intelligent planning* requires a knowledge of the personality and characteristics of the teacher. In addition to knowing strategies, research, and subject matter, the instructional leader must be knowledgeable of observation instruments and techniques for taking systematic data.
>
> *Recording useful data* in the classroom requires skill, practice, and understanding a variety of techniques along with a knack for being unobtrusive.
>
> *Skillful giving of feedback* relies on knowledge of:
>
> —a variety of teaching strategies or models of teaching
>
> —what has been learned about teacher effectiveness through research
>
> —the subject matter being taught (to analyze the process in relation to the content)
>
> —human development and child psychology (to analyze what students are doing—and maybe even why)
>
> —the official curriculum, pertinent policies, regulations, and laws

Acheson's list implies that instructional leaders need to know both what affects learning and how to communicate those principles to teachers.

Inservice training can help clarify teachers' intentions as well as bring intentions and performance together. They may also help to establish schoolwide goals and a common vocabulary of teaching that is shared by all the instructional staff. A principal who participates in—or even directs—inservice training will be much better prepared to perform meaningful teacher observations later. Inservice programs can be schoolwide or specific to certain departments (intended for the math faculty only, for instance). These inservice sessions can afford principals opportunities for centralizing teaching methods or "eavesdropping" on trends in specific content areas.

Learning from Teachers

Principals' knowledge of curriculum and instruction can be extended greatly by listening to teachers. Since it is unlikely that anyone will have comprehensive knowledge of all instructional areas, instructional leaders can keep their expectations and judgments of teachers realistic by watching and listening. Insights gained from listening may require patience and a temporary suspension of judgment on the principal's part. One principal, for example, questioned a teacher's abilities because the teacher's approach seemed somewhat unorthodox:

> For two years, during observations of and visits with her, [the principal] tried to understand her procedures and her rationales for them. At the end of that time, the principal admitted that he still did not fully understand all aspects of the teacher's performance. But he said that he had gathered enough information to convince him that she was highly effective with students—and thus he supported her strongly. (Rutherford)

Because there are so many variables in teaching and learning, an unorthodox approach may actually be in the mainstream of real education. Managing curriculum and instruction involves being familiar with content areas, instructional goals, and the wide range of approaches that can be used to meet those goals.

Encouraging Collaborative Planning

Principals can also learn about a school's range of instructional goals by encouraging teachers to plan collectively for instructional improvement and then sitting in on their planning sessions. Schools can have teacher teams plan curriculum or learning goals, or they can assign temporary task forces to address schoolwide instructional problems. In these arrangements, teachers identify the goals (the instructional problems to be solved) and the new approaches to be initiated in their areas of expertise.

Karolyn J. Snyder, an educational consultant, compares schools to football teams in their organizational possibilities. Just as teams are trained in units, so, too, can schools perform staff development in specialized units: "Principals might well seek to organize instruction around teaching teams for various age levels (for instance, 5-7, 8-9, 10-12) so that teachers can specialize in particular teaching functions (math, record keeping, ordering, student management, and team management) for the benefit of the entire team." In this sort of goal-setting arrangement, the principal can monitor the team's goals and make sure they complement the overall instructional goals of the department and the school for grade levels.

Promoting a Positive Learning Climate

Of all the important factors that appear to affect students' learning, perhaps having greatest influence is the set of beliefs, values, and attitudes teachers and students hold about learning. Lawrence Lezotte and his colleagues define *learning climate* as "the norms, beliefs, and attitudes reflected in institutional patterns and behavior practices that enhance or impede student learning."

The attitudes that students form about academic learning come, at least in part, from the adults in the school. In studies of both effective and ineffective schools, it is clear that the norms for learning come from the staff's requirements of students: the amount of time needed for studying, the amount of work assigned, the degree of independent work students can do, the degree of preparedness students feel about the work given them, the appropriate behaviors for school, and the staff's judgments of whether students are capable of learning. Of all these variables—all are controllable by the adults in the school—the most important is probably the expectations and judgments about students' abilities to learn.

Effect of Teacher Expectations on Student Achievement

Teacher expectations, in particular, have been linked to student achievement in two ways. Directly, teacher expectations affect the amount of time they devote to instruction, the time they spend interacting with students, and the quality of materials and activities they use. Indirectly, teacher expectations are transmitted to students and form the students' expectations and sense of the worth of academic work. That is, "the norms, expectations and attitudes that students hold come from their perceptions of what is appropriate in a given social setting," say Wilbur B. Brookover and colleagues, the authors of an intensive inservice program concentrating on improving school learning climate. Whether directly or indirectly, then, the messages that teachers and other staff send also return to them in the form of student norms.

In a school where expectations are low, the attitudes of teacher and students can form a vicious circle, a destructive self-fulfilling prophecy: "Students probably can't get this, so why try?" or "Nobody's paying much attention to whether I learn this or not, so why try?" The power of self-fulfilling prophecies such as these is insidious. They are difficult to change because they generate the evidence to substantiate their own bias. Furthermore, when we make self-fulfilling prophecies, we nearly always do so unconsciously, making them difficult to detect.

Benjamin Bloom holds that almost all students are capable of achieving age- and grade-level objectives. James H. Block and Lorin W. Anderson made this the basis of their program of Learning for Mastery; they, too, propose making objectives attainable for students by returning to objectives until they are mastered. This belief is quite revolutionary when compared to the operating

assumptions of many schools, which stratify students according to levels of expectations.

There is evidence, for instance, that ability groupings quickly become levels of expectations. When students are placed in lower strata, teachers often rationalize an overdose of practice and a much slower pace than is actually required (Joan Hyman and Alan S. Cohen). The result is bored, discouraged students in the lower groups, reinforcing initial assumptions about those students' abilities.

Taken seriously, the belief that nearly all students can learn at their age and grade levels creates a positive self-fulfilling prophecy, the reverse of the negative, prejudiced view. Because teachers are most often unaware of their behaviors, one of the first tasks of instructional leaders may be to set the tone of high expectations for students and teachers. Perhaps the most effective way of doing so is to offer as part of the school's educational goals that teachers and support staff will strive for every student meeting age- and grade-level objectives. High expectations are a fulcrum point that supervisors can use to pry teachers and staff away from unhelpful, unencouraging habits of instruction.

According to Brookover and colleagues, raising or lowering expectations has been shown to change a teacher's range of instructional activities. When teachers lower their expectations of students, they incorporate fewer of the following essential instructional elements in their teaching repertoires. When they raise their expectations, they use more of these elements.

- Amount and quality of praise for correct answers
- Actual amount of teaching students receive
- Content covered
- Response opportunity factor—number of times students are called on—extent to which the question is challenging—degree of cognitive demands
- Academic content (and more nonacademic activities)
- Verbal and nonverbal warmth and acceptance of the student in general
- Nonverbal cues—amount of: eye contact—forward lean—affirmative head nods—smiles—physical contact
- General encouragement and support
- Teacher assistance and willingness to help
- Wait time (the amount of time a student is given to respond to a question before the teacher gives the answer or moves on to another student)
- High academic evaluations—reflected by percentage of students expected to: master skills—complete high school or attend college—do A or B work
- Reinstruction of students in failure situations (i.e., probing, restating questions, giving hints, etc., until student arrives at

correct answer)

- Evaluative feedback and constructive criticism of school work
- Academically oriented teacher role definitions (i.e., lower expectations are associated with the belief that social control or other non-academic goals are the appropriate teacher objectives) (Brookover and others)

Improving the Climate for Learning

High expectations need not start or stop at the classroom door. In fact, the tone is easier to sustain if present all day long. For instance, one successful principal profiled by Jo Ann Mazzarella improved learning climate in a school by becoming accessible to students, speaking to them in the cafeteria and during sporting events. Together with having vigorous material support for instruction and strong expectations for student performance, this principal set the tone of accessible adult authority for the school:

> My strategy was this: if I can get a thousand kids and mold and sway their attitudes, their feelings about the school, and their feelings about me as an adult authority figure representative of all the other adult authority figures in the school, if I can set a tone with them, it's going to make things a lot easier for every teacher in every class they teach. I've done that in the four high schools I've been in and it's worked every time.

He mounted a successful campaign to reduce noise and eliminate trash in the school commons area, banning radios without earphones and urging students to pick up their trash. According to one teacher, he changed the climate for academics by getting students to realize that the school was also their responsibility.

Indeed, the key to improving learning climate and expectations may well be in impressing upon everyone—students, teachers, parents, and staff—that there is a close link between daily activities and student achievement. If faculty make disparaging remarks about students or their families, if they reward or praise sloppy work, or if they reward inappropriate behavior, then the learning climate is affected and expectations are diminished.

To reverse a negative learning climate, then, or to maintain an excellent one, an instructional leader has three tasks, according to Brookover and colleagues:

1. raise teacher expectations of students
2. communicate high expectations to all students
3. establish an instructional program that requires a mastery of objectives and also supports it

There are undoubtedly many ways the instructional leader can bring about each of these goals. For example, principals can share positive achievement data with teachers. Sharing good news about effectiveness in one area

can have a "ripple effect," motivating teachers to increase effectiveness in other areas, as well. Ultimately, the good news can affect student achievement, too, by conditioning teachers to expect good performances in formerly successful areas.

Rewards and Recognition

Both teachers and students respond to the common symbols that tie the school together. Leaders are symbol managers: they orchestrate the rituals that express the values of the school community. Symbols such as rewards for academic excellence—honor rolls, citations, and academic contests such as "college bowls"—make visible the underlying values in a school. "Learning is important here," they say, "and we recognize students who learn well." They may also raise the level of camaraderie around academic pursuits, making schoolwork a competition that involves preparation and performance in a group as well as alone.

Rewards and recognition not only add to motivation; they also enhance the sense of common effort that lightens the work of learning and teaching. Teachers working in less-effective schools have been found to speak seldom of their work or the school with enthusiasm. William L. Rutherford described the environment in such schools as "placid and nonthreatening": "It placed few demands on teachers, but it was also ambiguous and without rewards." Students, too, have been found to suffer the same malaise of vague expectations and indifference.

Protecting Time for Learning

Another way to improve a school's instructional climate is to increase the amount of time devoted to instruction. Studies show that time-on-task is highly related to achievement. The more time students spend on learning, the better the outcomes. Students also gain more interest in subjects and a better attitude toward learning when they maximize time-on-task. And just as learning is affected by time-on-task, so time-on-task depends on the quality of available time. It is important to note that the key word here is *quality*. Students can learn rapidly when the quality of instruction is good and when they are ready for what they are learning.

But we must be careful here not to oversimplify the research findings. As Lorin W. Anderson observes, it is wrong to focus only on the "time" factor and ignore the "on-task" part. Simply providing more time for instruction will probably not raise achievement scores. The use of time—that is, the quality of the time spent on instructional activities—must also improve. Indeed, some of the factors affecting the quality of instructional time are ways of improving the environment for instruction.

In a study of eight secondary schools, Jane A. Stallings and Georgea

G. Mohlman found that learning climate, including quality of instructional time, was affected by student behaviors, teacher attitudes, school policy, and principal leadership. In schools where policies regarding absences and tardiness were clear, well communicated, collaboratively made, and consistently enforced, students were more likely to learn and stay on task. Furthermore, teacher morale was higher. Where there were frequent interruptions during class periods, fewer students were on task, more students misbehaved, and more students were absent. Interruptions can be produced by tardy students or by P. A. systems. Where principals were seen as more respectful and supportive of instruction, teachers were more involved in their work and students in theirs.

Thus, increasing available instructional time must also be coupled with providing an environment that encourages concentration and attention to instruction.

Observing Teachers

The direct observation of teachers by principals is high on just about everyone's list of effective instructional leadership methods. In fact, research suggests that, when done well, observation and feedback are among the best forms of instructional management. In one study, principals themselves listed classroom observation as the second most effective strategy for improving instruction (ranked only after shared leadership for teachers) (Barbara Guzzetti and Michael Martin). But in practice, principals do not spend much time working directly with teachers on instruction, as Van Cleve Morris and his colleagues found in a three-year study of twenty-four principals. It appears, then, that meaningful teacher observation is more praised than practiced.

Considering the time principals must devote to observations to give them some validity and the potential impact of observation on principal-teacher relationships, it is not surprising that in some schools observations occur only infrequently and, when done at all, are cursory. The issues surrounding a commitment to a teacher observation program go to the heart of the problems of teaching and learning.

Keith Acheson says that observers and evaluators of teachers must have knowledge and skills in three areas. The first area, intelligent *planning*, requires a knowledge of strategies, research, and subject matter, as well as knowledge of the personality and characteristics of individual teachers. The second skill is recording *useful data* about teachers' performances. This is really a matter of being unobtrusive and knowing what to look for. Finally, the instructional leader must give helpful, *collegial feedback*. Like most adults, teachers respond best to reasoning from experience and to a concern with the problems in their daily activities. The instructional leader, then, seems to operate best as a facilitator of collegiality, setting the tone for continuous improvement of instruction rather than making prescriptions for ills.

Effective Observation Practices

Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little found five issues that separate valuable observation practices from those that were without purpose. Effective observation occurs in an environment in which there is agreement on five points: (1) the positive value of observation, (2) its place in the organization, (3) its nature and relevance for teachers, (4) the professional norms that it may strain, and (5) the time constraints on adequate observations.

Bird and Little found that the value accorded to observation differed markedly among the schools studied. Two of the schools allotted time for observation and feedback even though doing so meant taking time away from other activities the principals could be involved in. Establishing observation as a priority seemed to be a constant struggle. They noted one assistant principal who delayed all his observations for a semester because he had to design new student identification cards. In another school, principals were spending time policing the halls for smokers after the school board closed the student smoking area, which necessitated abandoning a well-planned observation schedule.

In addition to improving teacher performance, observations can be psychologically and socially beneficial as well. One such benefit may be giving teachers a sense of excitement about performing work that matters. Observations may also have professional rewards (as in advancement, recognition, or collegiality) or bureaucratic consequences. Moreover, observations can reflect on the administrators, as well. For instance, observations range from dropping in and out of classrooms to a systematic, structured supervision requiring followup and regular interaction between teachers and observers. The methods of observation reflect the administrators' views of their roles in supporting the work of the teachers.

The Organization of Observations

A second cluster of interrelated issues surrounds the organization of observations: the number of teachers observed in a semester, the frequency of observations, and the duration of the observations. In fact, as Bird and Little point out, observations may severely reduce the time administrators have to devote to other activities. Teachers told them that they begin to have faith in an observer's understanding of their teaching only after four visits.

Of course, there are risks involved with observations that are too infrequent, too cursory, or too long. Infrequent observations leave too much to rumor about expected kinds of instruction. Too many classroom observations in a day—ten, for instance—can take a toll on a principal's attention and reduce their value for improving a teacher's performance. Although a principal's "visibility" is a virtue touted by school effectiveness research, it has to be balanced against effectiveness. Finally, the length of an observer's stay in a

classroom might raise an issue of appropriateness—of "what's right and what's rude." The "right" length of an observation may depend on a particular school's culture: whether staying for an entire period or observing for two days in a row may call for special explanations to a teacher.

Because a teacher's faith in observations rests heavily on the criteria and procedures the observer uses to analyze teaching, observers should attempt to increase teachers' knowledge, confidence, skill, or professionalism. Apparently, the more frequently teachers are observed, the better use they can make of criticism. Bird and Little have found that teachers who are observed frequently make use of feedback even about clumsy performances as well as about those that are more polished. They develop a "thick skin" for criticism and often request observations during difficult class times if they believe they can learn from the observation. "I wish there were more observations," commented one teacher, reflecting the helpfulness of the observer: "This semester I'm trying out a new unit on heroes with a lot of team learning. I so wanted him here when I tried it out. He tried but he couldn't make it. But if he does give you time you know it's going to be quality time" (Bird and Little).

The Need for Reciprocity

Finally, Bird and Little point out the most sensitive issue in teacher observation—the problem of establishing reciprocal professional relations. It is problematic—and crucial—because nearly all the approaches to observation can be futile if a teacher does not sense a principal's respect, or even deference, for their own professional abilities. Putting the emphasis of an observation on performance, rather than personality, allows a teacher to feel that the principal believes in his or her capacity to improve.

Similarly, teachers must be able to trust their instructional leaders in at least three ways if the benefits of direct observation are to be maintained: first, they must believe that their observers intend no harm to them; second, that the criteria and procedures of evaluation are predictable and open; and third, that observers will provide information to improve the nuts-and-bolts of their teaching.

Resistance to the third area of trust may be psychological in nature, stemming from a belief that the observer's only real purpose is to criticize. Observations have the potential for becoming a glib sidewalk superintendency, with the observer feeling little or no responsibility and taking few risks themselves. At its worst, observation can actually erode the collegiality and norms of excellence that it was meant to fortify.

The observers who praise but fail to offer constructive criticism, or who criticize without analysis, are also sending the message to teachers that their feedback is formulaic, remote, and uninterested in developing the teacher's potential; they may even lack an understanding of the realities of teaching.

Bird and Little, who noticed these tendencies in the schools they observed, propose a five-point requirement of reciprocity that is designed to

offset some of the vulnerability teachers experience during observation by setting high standards for observers.

- First, the observer must promise to bring knowledge and skill to the observation in order to help the practitioner. At the least, the observer must promise that "I can make and report to you (the teacher) a description of your lesson which will shed new light on your practices and thus help you to improve them."
- The teacher, in turn, must defer to the observer's assertion—in effect, validating the observation process as a valuable instrument for improving his or her teaching. He or she must listen carefully and actively.
- To warrant his or her authority, the observer must display knowledge and skills a teacher can use: making a detailed, revealing record of the observation for the teacher, or offering feasible alternatives to the teacher's practices. This may involve requiring that written praise of classroom teaching be as specific and detailed as written criticism, or that teachers be able on occasion to observe those who observe them.
- Next, the teacher must try to change his or her practices in some significant way: in behavior, use of materials, approach to students, or perspectives.
- Finally, the observer must try to improve along with the teachers, with training, practice, and observation of the interactions with teachers.

According to Bird and Little, the basis of reciprocity in observation lies in the principle that "observation cannot be simpler than the teaching it supports." Obviously, efforts to improve the complex art of teaching are ongoing, requiring incremental improvements and starting with modest efforts at which both teachers and observer can succeed. Future observations can then build upon those successes.

The focus in an instructional leader's observation practices, then, must be on the problems and needs of the teachers. Using patterns of joint planning and shared responsibility, teachers can be influenced by an observer toward high standards. The potential for observation is great: for influencing higher expectations in instruction and, by extension, motivated outcomes in students.

Assessing the Instructional Program

Another task of instructional leaders is to assess and revise the instructional program. As in the case of supervising and evaluating teachers, whole programs can be reviewed for planning, objectives, success in reaching the objectives, and particular successes and problems. Ultimately, the success of any educational program comes down to the performance of the students: Are they reaching the objectives proposed? Where are they failing and why? The more specifically learning problems can be identified, the more successfully

they can be remedied or traced to particular objectives, units, or course activities.

Of course, students in any given level of education attain varying degrees of mastery. In any class, a certain number will grasp some concepts and not others. Schools are now under increasing pressure to raise the level of mastery. They are being held accountable for a minimum number of competencies and are being publicly compared on the basis of standardized test scores. It is imperative, then, that principals and teachers decide which objectives are essential and how best to teach them. Program assessment involves ways of following up the results of the instructional planning and teaching in a school.

For principals and other instructional leaders, the educational literature agrees, the assessment of achievement is not just fine-tuning an existing instructional program. It is an integral part of the instructional planning process.

Stages of Evaluation

Individual courses and whole programs can be monitored in similar ways. Evaluations of both can be divided into three stages: before the course or program, during the course or program, and afterwards. The precourse evaluation can be called *diagnostic*; the evaluation as the course proceeds is *formative*; and the final evaluation is *summative*.

Although many principals may perform one or two of these evaluations, few actually perform all three. When program evaluation is discussed, thoughts usually turn to summative (year's end) evaluations. But the instructional process in a school may remain a mystery if achievement data are reviewed only at the end of the year. "What happened here?" principals have been overheard muttering, uncertain how to connect statistical surprises in test scores with instructional strategies, learning climates, or other variables in their schools' instructional environments. To understand the outcomes, an observer must look back at formative (midcourse) testing of the particular objectives in each department and even the performances in classrooms.

Matching Objectives and Activities

The *intended* curriculum is embodied in objectives: what ought to be taught. Principals and other leaders can monitor the worth and nature of planned activities to see how they match the general program objectives and how they fit with each other. We have already addressed the subject of goals, which are best regarded as the long-range, broader aims of schools or programs. "Every child up to grade-level standards" or "providing students an adequate reading-base to develop writing skills" may be two goals. Objectives, though, are the short-term aims that break down the goals into specific steps, each of which can be attained in a finite period. Stated in this way, it is clear that objectives not related to goals may be trivial or, even worse, confusing to students.

Although much discussion has centered on the semantics of behavioral

objectives, wording is probably less important to a monitor than is the ability to find evidence of whether the objectives are being met. Well-written objectives specify the range of evidence appropriate to judging their success. The objective "to develop in students an understanding of the basic principles of algebra," for instance, could be rewritten to limit what the "basic principles" are: "Students will demonstrate their understanding of the number system and of basic concepts of sets."

In some situations, specifying the degree of understanding could also be appropriate: "Students will pass parts 1 and 2 of the departmental competency exam in algebra." In other situations, however, using a common test for evidence of understanding could be inappropriate. In teaching ethics, for instance, the quality of reasoning rather than the accuracy of response is clearly more vital; hence monitoring in values-education could adopt other kinds of evidence.

Attributes of useful objectives are as helpful for monitoring as for constructing programs. In W. James Popham's work on sound objectives, the capacity for monitoring the objectives is built into the objectives themselves. He suggests that objectives should clarify the instructional intention, describe a generalizable class of learner behaviors, have criteria for adequately judging students' constructed responses, incorporate the important conditions associated with the objectives inside the objectives themselves (such as academic prerequisites or vital materials), and have well-defined performance standards.

Sources of Data and Methods of Analysis

How can the instructional leader tell, then, whether objectives are being met? Answering this question is not as simple as just looking at the outcomes of teaching—that is, at test scores and the level of satisfaction—though those sorts of evidence are extremely important. Analysis of curriculum implementation must precede outcome analysis. Is the curriculum being run as intended? Is it coordinated and monitored at the classroom level? Program analysis includes testing of materials, spoken content, classroom activities, and the other ways of reaching program objectives. In other words, formative monitoring of programs is as important as summative monitoring.

Polling teachers for their perceptions of a program's strong and weak areas can contribute important information to an instructional leader. A mixture of formal and informal techniques can be used to keep in touch with teachers' concerns. A "concerns screen" is a formalized method of organizing teachers' progress and perceptions into patterns. One example of this sort of opinion-sampling, offered by Susan Loucks-Horsley and M. Melle, probes the faculty's success at integrating program objectives and resources into their classroom practices. The summary sheet in table 1 provides a scorable record, easily filled out and tabulated.

Table 1. Sample Building Summary Sheet

	1 *Outside Intended Program*	2 *Getting a Good Start*	3 *Well on the Way*	4	5 *Best Practices Working*
1. Time is devoted to science	*** **	*	**	*	**
2. Science is taught according to R-1 Guide	*** ***	*** **			
3. Assessment of pupil learning	*** ***	*** **			
4. Integration of basic skills	*	***** ****	*		
5. The outdoor classroom is used as recommended		*** **	*** *	**	
6. Recommended materials, equipment, and media are available			*** **	*** *	**
7. Inservicing and financial arrangements have been made		*	*** **	*** **	
8. Long and short range planning		***	*** ***	**	
9. Use of class time	**	**	****	**	*
10. Teacher-pupil interaction facilitates progam	***	****	****		
11. Classroom environment facilitates program		***	***	***	**
12. Instruction is sequenced to facilitate the guided inquiry learning approach	**	**** *	****		

School: Winter Elementary. Teachers: All grade 3, 4, 5, 6 teachers * = one teacher

Source: Loucks-Horsely and Melle (1982). Reprinted by permission of S. Loucks-Horsely.

Content Analysis

Much of the information available for program monitoring is found in documentary artifacts of teaching. A highly adaptable technique for mining these materials for evidence of a program's success has been called *content analysis*. This is a broad term for a critical analysis of teaching materials, reducing their complex ideas to lists, matrices, and other skeletal forms in answer to a leader's questions. For instance, a principal might want to look at a textbook in introductory chemistry classes to determine how usable it is. Some of the questions the principal could pose would be about the book's readability, its questions at the end of chapters or units, and its suitability for the teaching methods used in the school.

The principal would probably also want other tools to help perform the content analysis: readability formulas, for instance, to assess the reading-difficulty level; a taxonomy of educational objectives, such as Bloom's taxonomy, to investigate the questions in the chapters; and evaluation notes to match textbooks to teachers. Materials other than textbooks can be analyzed, of course. The contents of tests are fair game, as are job descriptions, state educational plans, or minutes of the meetings of parent-teacher associations.

Curriculum Mapping

An offshoot of content analysis, *curriculum mapping* combines the analysis of intended curriculum goals with the analysis of actual teaching patterns. It is intended to fill the gap that often exists between the intended and the actual curricula. Because of the loose coupling in the organization of schools, there may be no warning to teachers that their priorities in the course content and allotted time differ from those required to meet program objectives. By the time test scores begin to slide, it may be impossible to recoordinate a program.

A curriculum map records what is being taught at each grade level and sublevel, as well as what might be taught. Fenwick English provides an example of a curriculum map, reproduced in table 2, that differentiates the various topics in the science curriculum in one school system, divided by grades and marked by total time devoted to each topic.

Using a curriculum map, an instructional leader can see the breadth of the curriculum and its actual time priorities. In the table, the science curriculum appears to orbit around four topics: magnetism, nutrition, solar systems, and the human body. A map such as this one can provide a base upon which to decide new curriculum approaches. For instance, a decision may be made to include "optical illusions" in the science curriculum, since it is not being done now.

Long-Term Commitment

The commitment to use achievement data in the instructional program

TOPIC	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	*Total Time by Topic*
1. Simple Machines	I/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
2. Work and energy	0	I/1	R/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/1	3.0
3. Locomotion	I/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/.2	1.2
4. Insects	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
5. Magnetism	0	I/1	R/1	E/1	0	0	E/1	0	0	R/1	0	R/.5	E/.2	5.7
6. Weather	I/.5	0	0	E/1	0	0	0	0	E/.5	0	0	0	0	2.0
7. Kinetics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/2	E/1	3.0
8. Temperature	I/.5	R/1	R/1	0	0	0	0	E/.5	0	0	0	0	0	3.0
9. Nutrition	I/.5	0	0	0	R/1	R/1	0	E/.5	0	0	E/2	0	0	5.0
10. Sex differences	I/.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/2	0	0	2.1
11. Ecology	I/.1	R/.1	R/.1	R/.1	R/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.4
12. Solar system	0	I/1	R/1	E/1	E/1	0	0	0	E/1	0	0	0	0	5.0
13. Gravity	0	0	0	I/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/.1	1.1
14. Radioactive dating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/.5	0	0	0	E/.1	.6
15. Volume and mass	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/2	0	0	0	2.0
16. Bonding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/.1	.1
17. Human body	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	E/1	E/1	0	0	E/2	0	0	5.0
18. Cells	0	0	0	0	0	I/.1	E/.2	E/.5	0	0	E/.5	0	0	1.3
18. Plants	0	0	0	R/1	0	R/1	E/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.0
20. Tobacco and drugs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/1	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
21. Atom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	0	0	I/.2	1.2
22. Friction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	0	0	0	E/.1	1.1
23. Optical Illusions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
24. Waves	0	0	0	0	I/.2	0	0	0	E/.5	0	0	0	R/.1	.8
25. Quantum theory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	1.0
TOTAL TIME BY GRADE	3.7	4.1	4.1	5.1	3.2	4.1	3.2	3.5	3.5	4.0	6.5	2.5	4.1	

Legend: I=introduced; R=reinforced; E=expanded Time Delineation: number equals hours per week per semester

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is a long-term one. Indeed, it should be, as the collection of data will begin to pay off most only after an initial year or two. The first year can be a baseline year, during which information is compiled on each curricular group of students (age-groups, for instance, or career tracks). The groups of the first year, then, can be compared with those of later years.

Based on the findings of the first-year evaluation, objectives can be set for the following years' students. These objectives will take into account the differences in aptitudes or entering achievement levels between this year's students and those of previous years. Each year can be compared similarly, helping the staff evaluate the effectiveness, appropriateness, and value of each program or of key courses.

One of the most important uses of assessments is for the public recognition of success. Assessing means not only being able to improve programs but also being able to celebrate them—to reward the hard work and positive attitudes that produce high achievement. Rewards can also emphasize to students and staff the importance of doing well academically. Rewards can be bringing in outstanding speakers for the National Honor Society or arranging with local organizations to honor students who succeed academically. A principal's personal recognition of a faculty member's excellence or of the whole faculty for hard work and achievement can improve morale and stimulate better efforts in the future.

Sharing Instructional Leadership

Unaddressed so far is the question of who instructional leaders are. Although the principal is commonly assumed to be *the* instructional leader, a closer look at schools reveals that leadership is not any one person's prerogative. To those who know a principal's wide range of responsibilities, the need for sharing leadership is all too clear.

Even principals who put a high priority on instructional leadership find that, despite their good intentions, little of their workday may actually be spent handling matters directly related to teaching and learning. Bruce Howell found that, at best, elementary principals devote about 30 percent of their time to instructional leadership duties, while secondary principals devote only 20 percent to instruction.

A Neglected Activity

The question, then, is how to work instructional leadership into a principal's day. The danger—one that few principals will risk—is that they will neglect the noninstructional demands only to find that their school leadership role is neglected. In fact, certain management duties are essential to instructional leadership. To be good instructional leaders, principals must manage the nonclassroom activities that create a positive learning climate for learners and

teachers. One of the major duties of instructional leaders, according to recent reports, is to maximize instructional time by minimizing the number of classroom interruptions and by running interference between teachers and parents or district office. Principals may be more effective leaders by managing school business in order to smooth the way for classroom achievement.

Besides having important duties other than classroom supervision, principals might also suffer from a superman or superwoman complex—the belief that they need to do everything equally well. Unfortunately, with too little time or background to perform adequately all the necessary tasks of leadership, this complex may result in a principal doing everything equally poorly.

Clearly, it is preferable that a principal's duties—whether instruction-related or management-related—be shared, not abandoned. In most schools, other administrative staff, department heads, teachers, or outside consultants are available to share instructional leadership. Sometimes these people may even be better qualified. A department head, for example, is probably more familiar than the principal with effective teaching techniques or appropriate content area goals. A wise principal could use the leadership position of a department head, then, for goal-setting and teacher supervision. The principal would then be the primary goal-setter and supervisor, collaborating with and overseeing the leadership exercised by department heads.

Perhaps, as Caroline Persell argues, too much research and public discussion of instructional leadership has emphasized the principal's duties, neglecting the *unofficial* leadership in schools. Principals, she points out, cannot—and most do not—expect their plans to be instituted without alteration or interpretation by teachers and staff.

Norman Newberg and Allan Glatthorn noticed this sort of unofficial shared leadership in the junior high schools they studied. They found that instructional leadership was spread out among a variety of people rather than centralized in the principal. Like other researchers, such as Russell Gersten and his colleagues and William Firestone and Robert Herriott, they found that secondary schools generate instructional leaders among the staff more frequently than do elementary schools, where leadership tends to be centralized in the principal. In two of the junior high schools Newberg and Glatthorn studied, the reading chairpersons seemed to play an influential part; in another, the English Department chair was the key leader; and in a third school, a vice principal was the most important instructional force.

The key to effective instructional leadership may very well lie, first, in the flexibility a principal exhibits in sharing leadership duties, and, second, in the clarity with which a principal matches leadership duties with individuals who can perform them collaboratively. In sharing instructional leadership, then, the principal needs to know what tasks need to be shared and just how much guidance he or she should provide. To address these matters, let us look first at the critical leadership functions researchers have found in schools, then at the balance between sharing and delegating.

Critical Leadership Functions

In their study of instructional leadership in urban districts, Gersten and colleagues found that principals assume little of the instructional leadership in some districts. Most guidance for teachers, for instance, comes from trained supervisors and consultants. In answering why principals were not more involved, the researchers concluded that schools have sets of leadership duties—responsibilities that need to be done—regardless of anyone's job descriptions. These *critical functions* are necessary to maintaining and improving instructional programs.

An educational change program in a large urban district was successful, Gersten and his colleagues found, despite the indifference or opposition of the principals involved. The key to the program's success was the daily down-to-earth technical assistance given to teachers on classroom matters. Other research, too, has indicated that federally funded programs may be successful without much support from administrators and that successful programs are not dependent upon consistent administrative policies (See Gersten and others, who cited additional sources).

Giving teachers access to technical assistance with their classroom problems is one of four critical functions vital to the health of instructional programs, say Gersten and his colleagues. The other three critical functions are as follows:

1. specific inservice training of teachers on classroom issues, with extended followup
2. an educational model that succeeds with difficult-to-teach children
3. a system for monitoring student and teacher performance

Clearly, none of these vital activities can be shouldered entirely by a principal. In practice, they are carried out by a variety of teachers and staff with a range of expertise—reading coordinators, parent groups, department heads, school-level committees, or staff consultants.

Classroom teachers, it is generally recognized, do not look to administrators first for help in solving classroom problems. They perceive administrators as too far removed from daily teaching difficulties to offer much real help. According to Roland Barth, teachers are concerned with the *means* of instruction in most of their work with students. The critical functions of instructional leadership are actually the specific support teachers need to solve classroom problems.

Those critical leadership functions that the principal does not control directly he or she must, of course, oversee. In fact, in shared leadership arrangements, one of the most important tasks of the principal is to make sure that the critical functions are being performed.

Just what are some of these critical functions? A list of some primary leadership functions appears in table 3. Of the functions listed, some relate to guiding teachers, others to improving or maintaining high standards in students'

Teachers

Supervision
- Observing classroom performance
- Providing feedback on instructional skills
- Giving direction and support for individual teachers to eliminate poor teaching performance

Providing Inservice Training
- Arranging for instructional-technique inservices
- Collaborating with staff on inservice needs and offerings
- Attending or being briefed about inservice sessions
- Planning a general staff development program

Evaluating Teachers
- Scheduling conferences before and after classroom observations
- Providing teachers guidance to analyze their own instructional processes
- Focusing on improving teaching rather than condemning teachers' habits or personalities
- Concentrating on issues "small in number, educationally vital, intellectually accessible to the teacher, and amenable to change" (Acheson and Gall)
- Bringing in specific observations rather than general judgments
- Evaluating supervisors' techniques on the same bases used to evaluate teachers

Selecting Teachers
- Contacting all references
- Observing and having others observe teaching of job candidates and new teachers
- Hiring different types of staff to reach all students
- Following up new hirings with support and development opportunities

Protecting Instructional Time and Teacher Integrity
- Supporting teachers' professional decisions and needs
- Eliminating disruptive "official" interruptions in class time over public address systems or inclass announcements

Students

Setting and Monitoring Schoolwide Academic Standards
- Establishing academic requirements, consistent with and exceeding district guidelines
- Publicizing by word and print the high expectations of the school
- Providing counseling programs that challenge students
- Encouraging the use of standardized testing for improving academic performance

(Continued)

Table 3 *(Continued)*

Keeping test results available for teachers' reference and goal-setting

Limiting Class Size and Controlling Class Composition

Assigning students to teachers on the basis of factors that may affect learning
Experimenting with multi-age grouping
Avoiding "typing" students socially as the basis for assigning classes

Content

Overseeing and Facilitating Selection of Teaching Materials

Matching objectives and materials
Filling instructional priority areas fairly
Helping teachers develop materials not commercially available

Balancing Specific Program Objectives with Overall School Goals

Ensuring scope and sequence in school instructional program by forming scope-and-sequence guidelines and checking department programs for consistency with guidelines

Helping Teachers and Students in Being Aware of School's Curricula

Planning Collaboratively

Staffing committees with various viewpoints
Expecting staff input on materials selection and evaluation

(Besides the three domains discussed above, a general category affecting all areas of a school's academic life can also be shared. The following critical functions are clearly of major concern to everyone involved in the academic program of a school.)

General Instruction

Providing Rewards and Recognition for Teaching and Learning Achievements

Setting up ongoing systems for recognizing academic success, such as honor rolls, awards, or letters to students' parents
Facilitating peer-group emotional support and incentives for teachers

Setting High Expectations and Clear Goals for Student and Teacher Performances

Requiring yearly instructional goals for each teacher
Establishing policy on student promotion
Analyzing achievement test scores to find general strengths and weaknesses in programs
Maintaining order and a pleasant environment to teach and learn
Establishing and enforcing a clear code of conduct on attendance
Enforcing discipline personally with students
Refusing to stereotype students
Assigning staff and resources to confront the violation of rules
Clarifying policies personally or in writing

work, and a third group to curriculum supervision. These three domains of instructional leadership include activities that may be shared and those that are finally the responsibility of the principal.

Supervision and evaluation of teachers, for instance, are ultimately the principal's duty. But it is possible to divide them, as Acheson and Smith propose, so that some supervisory duties (classroom observation, for instance) are performed by others, though coordinated and overseen by the principal; the final evaluations are the principal's task. That is, the formative tasks of teacher supervision may be shared, but the summative tasks are the responsibility of the principal and school authorities above the principal.

The activities in the four categories in the table (teachers, students, content, and general instruction) are neither the principal's unique responsibility nor entirely someone else's. The principal can share many of them, retaining the authority to oversee how they are being done. The domains, of course, are interactive: increasing students' time on task, for instance, may best be furthered by protecting classroom time for instruction or by advancing standards in departments and classrooms. Sharing these tasks will only increase the likelihood that the areas of instructional leadership covered here will be mutually supportive and integrated into a school's working environment.

Defining Roles When Leadership Is Shared

The fact that the buck stops with the principal raises issues about potential troubles with role definitions in shared leadership. It may be hard to introduce collegial leadership to faculties used to centralized authority. Some studies of instructional leadership, such as those by Ronald Edmonds and by Shirley Jackson and others, have stressed that principals need to be assertive leaders. According to Edmonds, principals in schools that are improving tend to emphasize discipline and assume more responsibility for achieving basic school objectives. Principals in declining schools, on the other hand, tend to be permissive, emphasizing informal or collegial relationships with teachers.

These findings have been commonly interpreted to mean that principals should centralize authority in themselves. Edmonds' study also shows, however, that the problems in declining schools seemed to arise from a general lack of commitment to goals and a lack of accountability from teachers and administrators. It was harder to draw conclusions about the presence (or absence) of a particular leadership style. Thus, if shared leadership is to work successfully, it appears that everyone—faculty and administrative staff alike—must know their instructional goals and must also be accountable for students' achievement.

In short, collegial leadership should not do away with the lines of authority and accountability in a school. Unless the boundaries of teachers' duties as leaders are spelled out clearly, for instance, some may assume they have the authority to make decisions the principal would prefer to have. Furthermore, total-group decision-making tends to be overused in schools,

according to James Lipham. In the early stages of a change process, he observes, wide participation is appropriate. But during the time new programs are implemented, the lines of authority should be clearly defined.

Encouraging Norms of Sharing

What about the schools that simply seem to resist shared leadership? Much depends upon the experience of teachers in a school—how principals have managed instructional programs in the past, for instance—or on the degree of openness in a school. Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little found that norms about privacy vary from school to school. At schools where privacy is valued, repeated teacher observations may meet with disapproval, and there is usually less sharing of information and techniques among teachers. At these schools, there is also often less tolerance for shared leadership. Teachers may resist department heads making classroom observations, for example, or wielding power over their curriculum.

Bird and Little also discovered, however, that faculties who resisted shared leadership arrangements also had principals who avoided instructional support programs or who did not encourage experimentation in instructional techniques. Where schools had established a precedent of sharing improvement strategies among teachers or where principals were actively involved in staff development, faculties were more open to shared leadership. This finding makes sense: an atmosphere that encourages continuous improvement would also encourage emerging leaders among the faculty and sharing of critical functions. With a strong principal coordinating instructional support, such an environment could also encourage cooperation among teachers.

In coordinating leadership energies, the principal may benefit from carefully organizing the school staff to define clearly the leadership roles that need to be filled. Clarifying instructional leadership duties may mean reorganizing the school's administrative staff.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered several areas of instructional leadership that have recently received attention: the major contexts of the school and the community; the "technology" of instruction affected by instructional leaders (goal identification, curriculum and instructional management, learning climate, classroom observation, and assessment); and the possibilities for shared or team efforts. These are only a few of the areas related to instructional leadership, but they are vital in focusing attention on *leadership in context*: on actual instructional leaders rather than on "symbolic" instructional leaders.

Perhaps most definitions of instructional leadership are so general because it is difficult to define a personal commitment in its full range. Instructional leadership involves a leader's commitment to maintaining excel-

lence and improving the less desirable features of instruction in his or her school. Nevertheless, if it is to exist at all, a commitment must move from the stage of making symbolic acts to maintaining a working routine.

The research is unanimous in asserting that principals can have profound indirect effects on students' learning experiences. A principal's impact can be seen in the school's climate, in the motivation and goal clarity among teachers, and in teachers' expectations for students. The indirectness of the principal's role ("Can I really make a difference?") should not discourage anyone from trying to create a daily routine that includes goal-oriented attention to instructional matters.

No matter how centralized the principal's leadership role in a school, it is difficult for his or her influence to be felt directly in the classroom. A practical role for principals, then, is in being an agent of instructional support and an overseer of support functions. Principals can take advantage of the network of experienced or motivated people who make up the faculty and staff to provide direct, perceptive leadership of instruction in hard-to-reach areas of instruction. Depending on the school's culture, others in the school—department heads, assistant principals, or teacher committees—may participate in the planning, observing, training, delegating, testing, and summarizing necessary to provide an active, self-correcting learning environment.

This approach does not mean that principals (or other administrators) should be eager to delegate all instructional leadership roles to others. It does mean, however, that principals can meet the demands for instructional leadership by attempting to identify and meet those needs vital to improving student performances. In addition, sharing leadership may mean involving a whole faculty in a pursuit of excellence in learning—a pursuit that can be contagious.